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EXTRACTS FROM

REPORT upon Tour undertaken by Sir Edward Brown, F. L. S., on behalf
of the Bureau of Animal Industry, U. S. Department
of Agriculture, March - June, 1918

(In 1918 Edward Brown of England was regarded as the world's
foremost authority on poultry. Thus he was invited as a
part of the war effort of World War I to make recommendations
on improving poultry production in the United States).

In no area has the poultry industry been boomed to an equal extent
with Petaluma, CA. Within the district there are about 900 exclusive poultry
farms, conducted upon intensive lines. The light, poor soil was, for a time,
favorable in the extreme. Markets are within easy access at San Francisco,
to which city the cost of transit is low. The prosperity of Petaluma has been
built upon poultry, as 75 percent of the trade is concerned therewith.

There are several directions in which opportunities of extending the
poultry industry are great, and which as yet have scarcely been touched, namely
as a sphere and career for women, that is, where there is a measure of spec-
ialization. As already indicated, women are chiefly in control of poultry in
the Corn Belt. Elsewhere they have taken up this branch to a more limited
extent than might have been expected. Sufficient examples were met in which
that has been done. On one place in California, a fruit grower's wife made a
net profit of \$700 in 1917 from hens kept on her husband's farm. Others of a
similar nature could be cited.

Much might be done to increase egg and poultry production among the
alien population of the United States, who, so far as my observation has gone,
do comparatively little in this field. In the State of Washington is a large
colony of Hollanders. Many of these pay considerable attention to poultry
and have done very well indeed. It is a branch of their operations. I have
no means of forming any judgment as to what is possible among the southern
negroes, though at some of my meetings colored men and women were present.

Up to the present time comparatively little has been done in the United States in respect to development of a high-class table poultry industry such as is met with in Europe. Egg production has been the chief objective. Specialization has taken place with duck raising, on very good lines, and with turkeys to a lesser extent, but not with chicks, save in winter fowls south of Boston, which branch has declined considerably. The greater part of the chickens and fowls marketed are, so far as growers are concerned, a surplus product. That is, broilers are the cockerels not required, and older birds occupy the same category. There is no high-class American flesh breed. Without definite and distinct breeding for meat, whatever is produced must be of second or third quality. It is undoubtedly true that over a large part of American territory egg production affords the greater opportunity. There ^{which} the fatten/takes place, and has been responsible for a very marked advance in meat properties, add considerable to returns obtained. Fatten, however, cannot make an unsuitable bird into a fine table chicken, great though the improvement effected may be. In many parts of the country where, by reason of climatic or soil conditions, every influence is favorable to development of this branch, for which dry soil, abundant natural food, absence of excessive heat or cold, are indispensable. A further point is that, as a rule, fruit or dairy districts are most suitable to production of fine flesh in abundant quantity.

Among the various efforts made no one is more promising than the boys and girls poultry clubs. The members of these valuable organizations now number scores of thousands. Already considerable results have been achieved. The enthusiasm and interest engendered among these young people and their parents is seen on every side. Those able to form a judgment report that the work has justified itself a thousand fold, not only among the members of clubs

but their parents. If well sustained, it must influence profoundly the next generation, in addition to increasing present production. The more this excellent work is extended the better.

The decline of turkey breeding in the northern and eastern States during recent years, in fact its practical disappearance in many localities where formerly great numbers were bred, owing mainly to the ravages of black-head, is a serious reduction of production. It would appear to be a reflection upon breeders that in December, 1913, several thousand English turkeys were purchased and shipped across the Atlantic to be sold on the New York Christmas markets. Such, however was the case. Large numbers of turkeys are bred in the Southern States, but the methods adopted and quality are not high. My own view was expressed in the "Report on the Poultry Industry in America," (1906), that the disease referred to was due to ignoring that, (1) turkey breeding can alone be successfully maintained on large farms and with wide range; (2) that arable farms whereon is woodland are most suited to these birds; (3) that breeding from immature stock, artificial methods of hatching and rearing are undesirable for these birds; and (4) that natural feed is best for them. There are wide areas in America which should provide abundance of scope for this important industry.

In this connection a very important question deserves consideration, namely, what is found in Southern States, more especially the desert regions, though the same is to some extent met with elsewhere. My visits to Arizona, New Mexico, Texas and Oklahoma, which took place during the first half of the month of June, were during a period of great heat, the memory of which will remain with me. The burning deserts, the arid plains, the parched valleys, revealed conditions which must be reactive on poultry as on all other animals.

Where shade is general, the effect is minimized. Its absence must limit production enormously, making poultry-keeping a doubtful proposition. Conversations with State instructors and extension workers confirmed this view. I cannot imagine that poultry can be profitable on the bare open lands.

Where irrigation colonies have been formed, the aspect is altogether changed, as was evidenced in several districts, and for two reasons (1) that people have settled there, and (2) that the ground is cooler and contains some natural food. Concentration of effort to these remarkable colonies would appear to be desirable.

It only remains to speak of the fine work being done in connection with agricultural colleges and by the splendid body of federal and state extension workers, whom it was a pleasure and a privilege to meet. To them is committed a great responsibility, that of future development in their respective areas. The combination of these two bodies of workers is invaluable. Each without the other would greatly minimize the influence exerted. Colleges tend to be above the heads of and remote from farmers and others. There is always a danger lest the specialist who owns large flocks should receive greater consideration than the multitude of small operators which is very difficult to avoid. The extension worker comes into personal and immediate touch with the latter, thus bridging the gap that is often met with. The only criticism of poultry departments of agricultural colleges is that at many, not all, of these the operating plants are inferior to the instructional buildings, and are either designed upon specialist lines or are purely for experimental work. Probably this could be overcome either by separate plants for instruction, as is done in some cases, and for experiments, or by establishment of demonstration plants on general farms carried out on practical and commercial lines, that is, as a definite branch of the farm stock. One or more of these in each county, run by the

under supervision of the State poultry instructors, and as a business enterprise, would do much to demonstrate actual and profitable methods as a branch of agriculture, in that these would be models which others in the district could copy and emulate.

Reference has already been made above to the importance of encouraging breeders throughout the country, for these are important factors in development of the poultry industry, and without their co-operation advance will be slow. At the same time there should be an avoidance of seeking for what is merely abnormal and of a purely fancy character. The time has arrived when an attempt should be made to secure the knowledge and skill of these men for food production. They recognize in many instances, as I have had abundant evidence after addresses given on several occasions, that there must be closer affinity. To that end, while exhibitions deserve every encouragement, I submit that this shall be only where there is an adequate appreciation that food supply of the nation is the dominant factor.

In conclusion I desire to express my appreciation of the honour paid to me as a Britisher, and as a British subject, in being asked to undertake the mission upon which I have been engaged in behalf of the Department of Agriculture, and for the opportunity of studying poultry conditions in so many sections of the country; also, I wish to acknowledge the courtesies and excellent arrangements made by the staff of the Bureau of Animal Industry, under immediate direction of Mr. Harry M. Lamon; the attention paid to me by the various Federal and State members of the extension service, the help afforded by county agents, food administrators, members of colleges of agriculture, and others who cannot be indicated separately, from all of whom during the entire tour I received a cordial and almost overwhelming welcome. To one and all I extend my sincere and hearty thanks, for to their co-operation much of the success of and satisfaction in

this great mission are due. I have been deply impressed by the fine band of earnest, devoted and intelligent district and State Federal poultrymen who have responded to the call of the Nation at this time, and who realize the great responsibilities resting upon them.

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